

## Gender aspects of environmental development for sustainable development

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### **Abstract**

What is sustainable development? There are quite a few definitions in the literature, but there is no unambiguous, generally accepted interpretation of the essence of sustainable development. Usually, sustainable development is understood as development that meets the needs of the present, but does not threaten the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Thus, sustainable development will be if natural capital is renewed as it is depleted or replaced by artificially created capital, it is not eaten away. In other words, humanity should live off the interest on natural capital and not remain a debtor to future generations. The concept of sustainable development emerged as a result of combining three main goals: economic, social and environmental into a single system. The interaction of these elements with each other gives rise to the tasks of sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Gender, Environmental development, sustainable development

### **Introduction**

An essential condition for the transition to sustainable development is the establishment of gender balance, the expansion of women's opportunities in the social, economic and environmental spheres. All these issues were repeatedly raised at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo.

Today in Azerbaijan, unfortunately, it must be stated that active movement towards sustainability benchmarks is practically unnoticed. Neither an authoritative body nor specialized

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working groups for strategic planning have been created, public dialogue in this direction has not been established, and broad propaganda of the fundamental principles of sustainable development of Azerbaijan has not been organized. The current socio-economic development of Azerbaijan shows that the national economy has not yet managed to radically change the extensive type of development and ensure rational use of natural resources. The National Academy of Sciences has not made a significant contribution to its understanding and adaptation to Azerbaijani realities.

There is no active "green" public in Azerbaijan that could preach the idea that it is impossible to solve environmental problems in isolation from economic and social programs. The latter would ultimately allow a person to rethink the foundations of his worldview. In addition, women are not involved in the decision-making process at all levels and in all areas, and this is the main problem on the path to sustainable development. Research has revealed many obstacles to women's participation and use of natural resources. They include:

- lack of access to education and training;
- lack of female input into planning and decision-making;
- lack of property rights and land ownership;
- lack of gender-disaggregated data and gender impact research needed to implement gender-targeted strategies;
- general lack of gender awareness.

The following reasons can be highlighted among the absence of a gender dimension. Firstly, the existence of legally enshrined gender equality in the republic creates the appearance that gender problems do not exist. Secondly, there is a lack of comparable gender-disaggregated data in the economic, social and environmental spheres. Thirdly, the absence of gender-disaggregated statistics in the republic does not allow for the formation of a gender policy that would focus on solving specific problems within a clearly defined time frame. Fourthly, the absence of gender-sensitive - economists, ecologists, sociologists, political scientists, etc. Fifthly, the women's movement, which could greatly raise the interests of women in all spheres, is not strong enough. The essence of the problem goes back to the traditionally patriarchal way of life of the world, according to which the process of making strategic decisions is the exclusive prerogative of men.

In practice, we are faced with such a phenomenon as a serious misunderstanding of the need for

women to participate in the social decision-making process. Some arguments can be made in this regard:

- The principle of feminism is based on a positive attitude towards life, love, human affection and care for each other, commitment to the idea of being more than just an "owner"; it is based on a comprehensive, creative worldview, respect for equality, and not on the observance of non-historical attitudes. On mutual understanding, empathy, intuition...
- Women do not perceive nature as something that exists outside. They consider themselves and their surroundings as part of this nature...
- Human relations are the priority area of activity for women; they know best how to establish connections between people...

Mothers would never want their children to live in a life-threatening environment or to become victims of violence. Giving life and raising a human being is much more difficult than taking someone's life.

It is necessary to draw attention to the situation in society, to start a dialogue aimed at forming an understanding of the need to develop a more subtle approach to the issue of harmonizing society based on the principle of equality of social roles (it would be good if there were more women leaders and more men teachers). The development of such a society is the only way to resolve the ecological crisis.

Poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated. While poverty creates certain types of stress on the environment, the underlying cause of continued global environmental degradation is unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in industrialized countries.

The eradication of poverty, which is an essential condition for ensuring sustainable development, must be addressed in order to reduce differences in living standards and better meet the needs of the majority of the world's population. The depletion of natural resources leads to the displacement of people, especially women, from gainful activities and, at the same time, to a significant increase in the share of unpaid work. In both urban and rural areas, environmental degradation has a negative impact on the health, well-being and quality of life of the population as a whole, and especially of girls and women of all ages. Women living in rural areas and employed in

agriculture require special attention and recognition, where they must be provided with access to land, natural and productive resources, credit and development programmes. The environmental risks to which women are exposed at work and at home can have disproportionately severe consequences for their health due to their different susceptibility to the toxic effects of various chemicals. This risk is especially high in urban areas and in low-income areas where many polluting industries are concentrated.

By managing natural resources sustainably, women provide the livelihoods of their families. As consumers and producers, caregivers and nurturing children, women play an important role in promoting sustainable development, addressing the challenge of improving the quality and sustainability of life for present and future generations. Governments are committed to a new development paradigm that achieves environmental sustainability and gender equality and equity within and between generations.

Women are rarely trained as natural resource managers who influence policy-making, such as land-use planners, agriculturalists, foresters, marine scientists and environmental lawyers. Even where women are trained as natural resource managers, they are often underrepresented in formal institutions with policy-making powers at the national, regional and international levels. Women are rarely represented equally in managerial positions in financial and corporate institutions whose decisions have a particularly serious impact on environmental quality. There is also little coordination between women's non-governmental organizations and national bodies dealing with environmental issues, despite the rapid growth and visibility of women's non-governmental organizations in recent years.

Women can play a leading role or act as champions in promoting environmental ethics, resource reduction, reuse and recycling to minimize waste and overconsumption. Women can be particularly active in influencing sustainable consumption decisions. Women can also contribute to environmental governance, including through grassroots environmental campaigns at the local level, where decentralized environmental action is particularly needed. Women have special knowledge of ecological interrelationships and the principles of managing fragile ecosystems. Women are often the main livelihood providers and therefore play a key role in providing food and nutrition for their families and in preserving the environment.

The strategic measures needed for sound environmental management require a holistic, multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral approach. Recent United Nations global development conferences have recognized that sustainable development policies will ultimately fail without the participation of women on an equal basis with men. They advocate for women's effective participation in knowledge generation and environmental education in decision-making and governance at all levels. Women's expertise and contribution to sound environmental management are therefore central to Agenda 21. Unless women's contribution to environmental management is recognized and supported, sustainable development will remain an elusive goal.

Sound management of natural resources is essential for sustainable development. But too often, such management is not possible due to the primacy of profit-making policies over socially and environmentally conscious policies and practices. Moreover, sound governance is crucial for sustainable development. There is growing evidence that gender equality in rights and access to resources is associated with less corruption and better governance. For example, World Bank data from public opinion research in 43 countries shows that women have more negative attitudes toward corruption than men. More research is needed, but the evidence already available suggests that gender equality can promote development through better governance.

In the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995, the need for the active involvement of women in decision-making at all levels, as well as the consideration of gender issues in all sustainable development strategies, was considered on the agenda of one of the 12 most important tasks, the solution of which requires special attention and action from the international community, government and civil society. Analysis of data on the distribution of officials by gender showed that in Azerbaijan it is more difficult for women to make a political career than for men .

### **Conclusion**

This situation is typical for the entire post-Soviet space. This is obviously facilitated by the presence of established stereotypes and norms of behavior, as well as traditional, religious customs and ideas that belittle the social role of women. In the countries of the Muslim world, there is a social model of the priority of men over women, women are assigned a second role, and usually the man makes decisions, both in the family and in society.

Empowering the world's poorest people, the majority of who are women, especially rural ones, must be seen as an integral part of any environmental strategy.

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